

T H E
SHAPWICK WONDER! or, The Sea Crab.
A C O M I C P O E M.

Facta dictis exacquanda sunt.

S A L L.

IN ev'ry clime, or country known,
'Tis held men most esteem their own ;
Each county, town, and parish too,
Is held tenacious to their view :
But of the parish this befel,
Bespeaks them quite irascible,
To take such umbrage at a word
That's full a century on record ;
Record ! I mean a word of terror
A hundred years, to son or father.
But, to be brief, let this prevail,
I'll therefore beg to tell my tale.

Once on a time, it happen'd so,
(Perhaps an hundred years ago)
A Monger, who was forc'd to ride,
His fish to sell, o'er commons wide,
Trotting along, by fortune cross'd,
One of his finest Crabs he lost,
As he was riding down to Bere,
Near Shapwick Town, in Dorsetshire.
Just as bright Sol was going down,
Return'd from work a country clown,
Trudging along, in simple nature,
Just trod upon the crawling creature ;
The Crab he sprawl'd, which made him start,
Against his bosom bounc'd his heart ;
While panic fear assai'd his mind.
Sideway, like Crabs, some yards reclin'd.
The sight so strangely did appear,
He thought the devil had been there ;
His hair erect, stood bolt upright,
As if he'd really seen a sprite ;
Then praying for some more assistance,
He stood and view'd him at a distance ;
Resolv'd to go to Shapwick Town,
In haste to make his wonder known ;
Which done, the country ail did hie,
This hideous monster to descry ;
With sticks and stones these silly elves
Collected, to defend themselves ;
Just got in sight the place to see,
Where they supposed him to be :
Old Hobson, who before had found him,
Cried, "that's he—pray don't surround him,
" For he is swift of foot, I'm sure
" He's got a dozen legs, or more."
The Crab, a thymy bank had found,
Went crawling on the fragrant ground,
With fearful eyes they him regard,
Tho' at a distance fifty yards ;
They unto one another swore
They never saw the like before :
" Oh ! then (bespoke the farmer John)
" The shepherd Rowe's the likeliest man ;
" He'll tell, if any in Shipwick can."

But, how to get him, was their fear,
He'd kept his bed a dozen years ;
They strait unto the shepherd went,
And told the Sage their full intent,
Praying he would not them deny
To go, the Monster to descry :
The shepherd, struck with vast surprize,
Seem'd first unwilling to arise,
But, by recital of their pray'r,
Consented to be carry'd there.
The carriage that they got, we find,
Was one of the Wheelbarrow kind ;
Such was the carriage got in haste,
For coaches then were not the taste :
A careful driver next they found,
For steady wheeling high renown'd ;
Then in they plac'd the ancient sage,
Whose head was silver'd o'er with age ;
So, on they go, with all the town
Encircling the poor shepherd round ;
But, when the Crab the shepherd view'd,
Near thirty yards from where it stood,
Unto the man did straitway cry,
Lest, fearing he should wheel too nigh,
Exclaim'd in haste, and choak'd with cough,
" It's a land monster! WHEEL ME OFF!
EMPHATICAL, reply'd again,
" WHEEL OFF! or else we're all dead
" men!"

Just at that time the man came back,
Who lost the Crab from off his pack ;
Sees the Crab, with haste he snatch'd it,
And eager flung it in his basket :
But, when the crowd perceiv'd the man
Take up the Crab, they straitway ran
In haste, to know the monster's name,
And how he risk'd to touch the same :
" You silly fools, can it be so,
" A fish so common not to know ?
" This is a Crab, caught in the sea ;
" This morning it was lost by me.
" So many fools upon the green
" At one time, sure, were never seen."
Confus'd they on each other look,
And rapidly the down forsook ;
And left the Monger far behind,
The fun to ponder in his mind ;
The people, to this very day,
In Shapwick Town, I'll boldly say,
Can't bear to hear the smallest hint,
Without their smelling some affront ;
But, what they think the greatest scoff,
Is that emphatic word, WHEEL OFF !
If any says it as he passes,
Ten to one he's mobb'd by asses !

